

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION HEARING**

November 12, 2025

Testimony of Max Benica  
In Support of: Senate Bill 367

**TESTIMONY**

Hello, my name is Max, and I am from the city of Amesbury, also with Students Speak. Yes, I support Senate Bill 367, and I believe that when you give student committee members voting rights, you empower the student population through representation. Based on my interviews with individuals in other states, a core principle necessary for improving Senate Bill 367 is to formally provide mentoring to student school committee members.

In referencing the Maryland statute on student representation and speaking to a student member, I realized the importance of a student vote and the representation it holds for the *entire* student body. In our interview, we asked her why a student vote was imperative. She mentioned that students had been shunned and lacked representation among the people meant to ensure a safe and efficient environment for students to learn in. She then went on to add, “[Busy schedules make it] difficult for adult members to get into school buildings.” Essentially, because adults are not present in schools, they can only project what they think will be useful to the student body, but students and their vote are the truest representatives of the policies being enacted, given that they live through them each day.

As I have learned, this role may be challenging for a student member to balance, so it would be helpful if they had a mentor as a resource to support them. However, the current draft of Senate Bill 367 insufficiently addresses the role of advisors and fails to mandate a mentor for student committee members. An Equity Officer from Oregon of whom I spoke to is a committee advisor who values every student she works with. Through our conversation,

it put into perspective that there are spaces where adults and youth come together with an equal stake and ability to collaborate to effect policy for the betterment of the student population. I am a part of the Partnership of Amesbury Community and Teen’s, otherwise known as PACT. I’m currently the lead, setting up all the meetings, running left and right, trying to figure out our financial situation, since we do not have an adult advisor to help us. In speaking with her and working with my mentor, Janessa, on this initiative, I’ve learned how necessary it is for adults and youth to achieve greatness.

To reiterate, I support Senate Bill 367 and recognize that, together, we can redraft it to ensure student committee members succeed in their roles alongside a trusted mentor. Thank you so much for listening to my testimony today. Any questions you have can be directed to us and our mentors, Janessa and Michael.